

Art history's history in Melbourne: Franz Philipp in correspondence with Arthur Boyd¹

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Figure 1 Franz Philipp 1950s

One of the new critical inquiries in art history that has developed in the last few years has been the German analysis of the impact that Jewish émigré art historians had on the development of art history in English speaking countries after the Second World War. The subject of German refugee art history began after the German unification and is very much a Berlin reassessment of the past from a nation that invented the discipline of art history. In this new enquiry the theoretical preoccupations of art historians like Erwin Panofsky and others, who immigrated to the United States, are seen as stemming from

¹ This article is a revised text of the annual lecture of the then Art Association of Australia, in honour of Franz Philipp, delivered at the Association's conference in Adelaide on 3 October 1998. In the preparation of this lecture I have enjoyed discussing the past with Arthur and Yvonne Boyd, Ursula Hoff, Patrick McCaughey, June Philipp, Bernard Smith, June Stewart and many others, to all of whom I am grateful. Much of the documentary material is taken from the University of Melbourne archives, as is the correspondence between Philipp and Boyd (DS L 11/3. Acc.36. 166); all references to the correspondence are to this source; I am grateful to June Philipp and Arthur Boyd for permission to reproduce extracts from it. Other archival sources in the University of Melbourne have also been consulted, such as those of the Central Registry and the School of Fine Arts, Classical Studies and Archaeology. Arthur Boyd's work is reproduced with permission of the Bundanon Trust. As an appendix I include a bibliography of Philipp's publications, as they have previously been given only partially. [The JAH is unable to publish reproductions of Arthur Boyd's paintings because of the prohibitive copyright costs. RAW]

autobiographical concerns. For example, Panofsky's decision to interpret Renaissance painting in terms of Neoplatonism has been seen as a choice he made to espouse a philosophy that was antagonistic to the politics of Fascism.² The representation of sexuality in Italian Renaissance painting, especially in pictures by Titian, such as the *Sacred and Profane Love*, c.1516 (Borghese Gallery, Rome), was explained by Panofsky, as representations of the two Venuses, one celestial, the other earthly, as described in Neoplatonic philosophical texts. For Panofsky acknowledge himself, that the almost limitless flexibility of the Neoplatonic doctrine meant that it could be applied to different kinds of imagery. For other art historians this form of explanation was viewed as a means to avoid an interpretation of sexuality.³

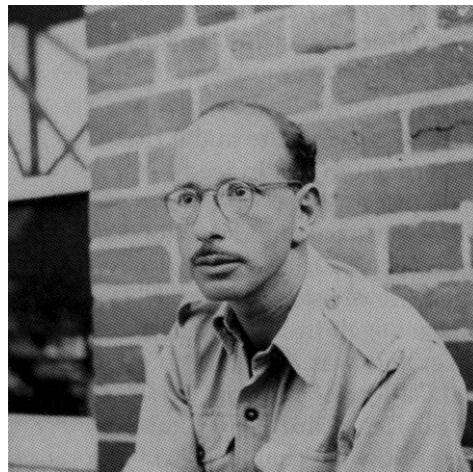


Figure 2 Franz Philipp 1946

Panofsky's formation in Hamburg with Aby Warburg was very different to that of the Viennese art historian Franz Philipp (figs 1, 2). It is Philipp's career I wish to explore here, and to whom the annual lecture of the Art Association of Australia is dedicated.⁴ I have been asked to address the question of who Franz Philipp was, and to consider his legacy to Australian art history. In one sense this is an easy question to answer. When I was an undergraduate in the University of Melbourne, he was the teacher who meant the most to me. Indeed I still perceive his legacy in personal terms.⁵ Yet within this wider German enquiry about the relationship between the autobiography of art historians and the subject matter they choose, my questions about art history's history in Melbourne have developed into a more critical enquiry about the nature of interpretation.⁶

² On the overestimation of the importance of Neoplatonism for the Renaissance, especially in twentieth-century art historical writings on iconography, see H. Bredekamp, 'Götterdämmerung des Neuplatonismus', *Kritische Berichte*, vol. XIV, no.4, 1986, pp. 39-48.

³ Panofsky's classic article on Titian is chapter 5 in his *Studies in Iconography. Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1939, pp. 129-69; and that by Edgar Wind, in chapter 10 of his *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*, London: Faber and Faber, 1968, pp. 121-28.

⁴ In 1999 the organization was renamed the Art Association of Australia and New Zealand.

⁵ At least two of his former students, Patrick McCaughey ('Franz Philipp – a tribute by Patrick McCaughey', *Art and Australia*, vol. 8, no.3, 1970, p. 218) and Virginia Spate ('Franz Philipp', *Art and Australia*, vol.30, no.4, 1993, pp. 516-17) have written essays about their personal recollections of studying with him.

⁶ *Art and Australia* dedicated the winter issues (no.4) of 1993 to the contribution made by European émigrés to Australian visual culture, whether as artists, architects, art historians or dealers.

The Department of Fine Arts in Melbourne began in 1946, with the appointment of the first Herald Chair, Joseph Burke, and was intended to support the great and growing collection in the National Gallery of Victoria. The charismatic Sir Daryl Lindsay, then director, persuaded Sir Keith Murdoch, Chairman of the *Herald and Weekly Times* to have his company endow the chair, in commemoration of the allied nations' victory in the Pacific. The intention was for close co-operation between the University and the Gallery, particularly with a few to training curatorial staff. It was the first university in Australia to establish an art history department, and its establishment followed that of the Courtauld Institute by only a decade.⁷

Burke's early career in England had been curatorial, for he had been attached to the National Portrait Gallery in London from 1934 to 1938, and had spent a year as assistant keeper at the Victoria and Albert Museum. At the outbreak of war he was seconded to the Home Office. From 1938 until 1945 he was private secretary to successive Lord Presidents, and finally, to the Prime Minister Rt. Hon Clement Attlee from 1945-46. In his application for the Melbourne Chair, Kenneth Clark supported Burke. On 3 March 1946, from 10 Downing Street, Whitehall, Burke wrote to Clark to thank him:

*Dear Clark, I have just received a cable from [Sir John] Medley offering me the Chair. I need hardly say how delighted I am. It will be a great opportunity. I shall do my best to make a success of it and to justify your confidence in supporting my application. With heartfelt thanks. Yours very sincerely, Joseph Burke.*⁸

Following the appointment Lord Clark wrote to the Vice Chancellor on 25 March 1946, that Burke

*is a good scholar, has a wide range of interests and gets on well with everybody. The positions he has held during the war have given him an ease and confidence in dealing with people, which are rather rare among scholars. I cannot think of anyone else who would be as good. It is excellent news that the University is offering this Chair, and I believe that Burke would make a real success of it.*⁹

Burke's research was in eighteenth-century English art, which underwent a radical revision in methodology in the years when the Warburg Institute had migrated to England. His English M.A. was a critical edition of Hogarth's *Analysis of Beauty*, later published, and a second M.A., for Yale, was a biographical and critical study of Benjamin West. The strength of the collection of the National Gallery of Victorian in eighteenth-century English art owes much to his advise, both to the Felton Bequest of which he was

⁷ On the early history of the department, see J. Burke, 'The fine arts and the Australian universities', *Vestes, the Australian Universities' Review*, vol. IX, no.4, 1963, pp. 259-66; and U. Hoff, 'Observations on art history in Melbourne 1946-1964', *Australian Journal of Art*, vol.III, 1983, pp. 5-9.

⁸ Joseph Burke, letter to Kenneth Clark, 3 March 1946, Kenneth Clark papers, Tate Gallery, London, archive.

⁹ Kenneth Clark, letter to John Medley, 25 March 1946, University of Melbourne Registry, archive. There is no copy of Clark's reference for Burke among his papers in London at the Tate Gallery archive.

an active trustee, but also to the Everard Studley Miller Bequest¹⁰ which was substantially about portraiture, which was Burke's field. Indeed he was going to contribute a booklet in a series, produced by the National Gallery of Victoria in the 1960s, entitled 'The formal and informal portrait', but the pressure of administration prevented him from completing it.

After war-torn England Burke and his wife Agnes found Australia a paradise, and the mood of the department was optimistic. Burke made a brilliant appointment in his first year (1947) with Ursula Hoff, a German art historian, who had studied at the Warburg Institute, Hamburg, and who had written a doctoral thesis on 'Rembrandt and England' (1935). Rembrandt was well represented in the Gallery and her appointment was a joint one with the Department of Prints and Drawings at the Gallery. In 1950 Franz Philipp was appointed lecturer, followed by Bernard Smith in 1956, the first Australian-born art historian to hold a post in a university, and whose lifelong activity, in contrast to the others, was to be the study of Australian art.

The varied intellectual provenances of these art historians created a rich interplay of theoretical backgrounds and diverse fields of art history. I studied with all four, and from each learnt a great deal. Indeed looking back it is uncanny how many of my publications were stimulated by courses in my undergraduate years. But it was Franz Philipp who was the most important for my formation as a scholar, together with Ian Robertson in the History Department, for I profited from the Melbourne system of combined honours degrees.

Philipp was born Franz Adolf Philipp on 20 March 1914 in Vienna. His father was an Austrian importer of fine English cloths. With his two brothers and sister he attended a classical school, the Humanistisches Gymnasium in the Döbling suburb. From 1933 he studied art history at the University of Vienna, with some of the greatest Viennese scholars, Julius von Schlosser, Hans Tietze, Martin Eisler, Karl Swoboda and Hans Sedlmayr. In addition he took courses in history, in medieval history, in palaeography, diplomacy, medieval historiography, and also in archaeology, French, Italian and philosophy. In his teaching and his writings it was Schlosser whom he always paid tribute to as his 'great teacher'.¹¹ About the celebrated Nazi of the group, Philipp later commented 'the infamous Sedlmayr [was] a brilliant teacher, apart from his lack of moral and scholarly integrity.'¹²

In 1936 his father died, and in the following year Philipp began his doctorate on 'The mannerist portrait in northern Italy', I suspect under Hans Tietze. He spent four months on a scholarship, a stipendiate of the Kunsthistorisches Institut, Vienna, in the summer

¹⁰ P. Paffen, 'Everard Studley Miller and his bequest to the National Gallery of Victoria', *Art Bulletin of Victoria*, no.35, 1994, pp. 35-44.

¹¹ As in his 'Vasari and the Renaissance', *Melbourne Historical Journal*, no.2, 1962, p. 24.

¹² Philipp's annotation in c.1950 to his own curriculum vitae, which he had sent Joseph Burke, in the archives of the former Department of Fine Arts, now the School of Fine Arts, Classical Studies and Archaeology, University of Melbourne.

and autumn of 1937 collecting material in northern Italy. He began writing in the spring of 1938, but was prevented from completion by Sedlmayr, who had him expelled from the university. Philipp published only one article on a subject related to his thesis, on Jacopo Tintoretto's *Portrait of Doge Pietro Loredan, 1567*, in the National Gallery of Victoria, the most significant mannerist portrait in an Australian collection.¹³ Recent scientific analysis has confirmed that the Melbourne version is earlier than other variants, such as the one at Fort Worth.¹⁴

Though he may have published little on portraiture Philipp's knowledge informed his teaching. He must have triggered my own fourth year honours thesis in 1965 on the subject of Giorgionesque portraiture in northern Italy, where I defined a typology of motifs that originated with Giorgione and was developed by his followers.¹⁵ In his teaching Franz Philipp provoked an interest in broader patterns of visual analysis, such as those initiated by Alois Riegl, and Heinrich Wölfflin, and was fond of quoting Wölfflin's statement, that in the history of art 'the effect of picture on picture was perhaps most important than any other (external) impact'.¹⁶ For most of his students it was the fourth year honours course in the historiography of art history that proved seminal for future research. There we examined the history of style or 'art history without names', the history of style and language in the writings of Julius von Schlosser, and all the Vienna school, especially Riegl. Other subjects to which I was introduced included an analysis of connoisseurship and Giovanni Morelli, and the iconography of Edgar Wind. I was later to edit the works of both Morelli and Wind.

At the outbreak of war Philipp was sent to the notorious concentration camp at Dachau with his younger brother Ernest. His mother bribed a corrupt Nazi official, who allowed them to escape to England, where Franz became an agricultural labourer and dairyman in Yorkshire, while Ernest joined the British Army Parachute Regiment. They attempted to get their mother and sister out of Austria, but were eventually informed by the Red Cross that the two women had died at the prison camp. In the Latin inscription that he wrote for his tomb (fig. 3), in the Melbourne cemetery, Franz Philipp not only anticipated his own death, but also commemorated that of his much loved mother, who had died at Auschwitz without burial:

¹³ 'Jacopo Tintoretto's *Portrait of the Doge Pietro Loredano*', *Quarterly Bulletin of the National Gallery of Victoria*, vol. XI, no.2, 1967, pp. 2-4.

¹⁴ John Payne, 'Tintoretto's *Doge Pietro Loredano* at the National Gallery of Victoria: the earlier version?', *Art Bulletin of Victoria*, vol. XXXIII, 1993, pp. 57-61.

¹⁵ In my thesis I defined about ten portrait motifs, under the conceptual heading of 'the portrait of action', such as the turning portrait, or the portrait of a lover with a hand to his or her heart. The new typology of Venetian portraiture originated with Giorgione, and was widely disseminated among his follower. My model was the study by Alois Riegl, the founder of the Vienna School of art history, on the Dutch group portrait *Das holländische Gruppenportrait*, 1902, a book which we had studied in dept. A brief synopsis of my thesis was later given as a lecture at the international conference in honour of Giorgione, 'The Giorgionesque portrait from likeness to allegory', *Giorgione. Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studio per il 5° Centenario della Nascita, Castel-franco Veneto, 29-31 May 1978*, Venice: Stamperia di Venezia, 1979, pp. 153-58.

¹⁶ Philipp, 'Vasari and the Renaissance', p. 26.



Figure 3 Franz Philip's tomb

FRANZ PHILIPP
 N. Vindobonae 29-3-1914
 M. Londinii 30-5-1970
 Filius EDMUNDI M. 1936
 ET
 KAROLINAE N. Selinko M. 1941-2
 Cui in Polonia A Germanis
 Tempore Ignoto Occisae
 Non Est Tumulus
 Sit Tibi Terra Levis, Carissima
 Cui Ultimae Pietatis Et Amoris
 Signo Suffigoave Atque Vale.

In 1940 Franz was interned as an enemy alien, and sent on the *S.S. Dunera*, together with 2000 men of German origin, many of them Jewish intellectuals, on a lengthy voyage around the Cape of Good Hope to Australia.¹⁷ In later life he was unwilling to talk about the brutal events on the *Dunera*, when the British officers brutalised the internees, looted and destroyed their possessions, as well as subjecting them to other indignities. When the 'Dunera boys' arrived in Australian in 1940 they were kept in camps at Hay and Tatura where they found the Australian military somewhat laid back in comparison to the British, and once again they enjoyed a limited freedom, enough to pursue their intellectual lives.

¹⁷ Some account of the internment in 1940 is given in *The Dunera Affair: A Documentary Resource Book*, P.R. Bartrop with G. Eisen (eds), Melbourne: Schwartz and Wilkinson and the Jewish Museum of Australia, 1990. However, both the British and Australian Governments have placed an embargo on the files relating to the *Dunera* affair for 100 years.

It was at Tatura that a camp university was founded and Philipp gave lectures in art history,¹⁸ together with Hans Heckroth, a Frankfurt stage designer, destined to be celebrated as the designer of the sets for the film *The Red Shoes*, Ludwig Hirschfeld-Mack, the Bauhaus artist, who was to teach at Geelong Grammar, and Ernest Kitzinger, who later became professor of medieval art history at Harvard. An impression of the camp is conveyed in Leonhard Adam's paintings.¹⁹ Adam was a Berlin ethnologist and judge, formerly a reader in primitive law at Berlin, who later taught ethnology at Melbourne. He remained in Australia, where he became one of the pioneering figures in the study of Aboriginal art; and part of the University of Melbourne's museum's collection was created by him. In Philipp's later survey of research in art history for the Australian Humanities Research Council, published in 1959, he began with an account of studies on ancient aboriginal rock painting, a subject he must have encountered for the first time at Tatura university. To give indigenous art such a prominent position in a survey of research was unusual for the time.²⁰ Philipp encountered the Australian landscape for the first time at the Tatura camp. In his monograph on Arthur Boyd and other writings the Australian landscape became one of his most passionate subjects.

Following the closure of the camp, Philipp was on active military service from 1942 to 1945, principally engaged loading ships on the docks. At the same time he commenced his studies for a Bachelor of Arts Honours degree in Melbourne, as a part-time service student, specialising in Italian Renaissance history under Professor Max Crawford. In 1946 he came top of his year, receiving the Dwight Prize and Wilson Scholarship, the success of which led to his appointment as a senior tutor in history. At some point, after the war had ended, the University of Vienna offered to grant Philipp the degree once denied, but he declined. In 1948 he married a fellow honours student in history, June Rowley, the daughter of a grazier from Bethanga, and, in the following year, moved to the Department of Fine Arts as assistant lecturer, and then lecturer in 1950. Burke, whose formation had been largely in museums, considered Philipp the 'architect' of the new department, and that Philipp's Renaissance course was the centrepiece for those going into art gallery and university work.²¹ The intellectual architecture was outlined by Philipp in 1948, in an ambitious article on the study of art history in Australia for *Present Opinion*.²² Scholars of the Viennese school were praised for having created a study of the 'science of the mind' (*Geisteswissenschaften*), which went beyond the historiography of Jacob Burckhardt or the unifying comparisons of styles devised by Heinrich Wölfflin. So an Australian version of the Austrian 'sciences of the mind' was Philipp's agenda for the new

¹⁸ C. Pearl, *The Dunera Scandal. Deported by Mistake*, London/ Sydney/ Melbourne: Angus and Robertson, 1983, pp. 78-79.

¹⁹ See the catalogue of Adam's watercolours, *Leonhard Adam. From the Spree to the Yarra. Aquarelles: 1911-1955*, Museum of Art, University of Melbourne, Spring 1996. See also *The Dunera Experience*, catalogue of an exhibition at the Jewish Museum of Australia, September 1990 to February 1991.

²⁰ A. Grenfell Price (ed.), *The Humanities in Australia*, Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1959, and the section by Philipp, 'University research in the history of art', pp. 160-61. The survey was updated by J. Stewart, *Bibliography Essay on Art Historical Studies in Australia since 1958*, Adelaide: Sydney University Press for the Australian Academy of Humanities, 1974.

²¹ Stated in a reference Burke wrote for Philipp to the Carnegie Corporation of New York, 28 September 1962, School of Fine Arts, Classical Studies and Archaeology, University of Melbourne, archives.

²² Franz Philipp, 'Some notes on the study of the history of art', *Present Opinion*, vol. III, no. 1, 1948, pp. 67-70.

department. The fine arts, he thought, were a most significant expression of the collective content of a civilisation, more so than even literature or music, even though he felt passionately about music: 'The correlation between the fine arts, especially between the architecture of a particular period and its communal life, is perhaps more tangible, and more accessible to the scholar's enquiry'.²³ Philipp had spent much of this time in Vienna and Melbourne studying pure history but, for him, of all histories art history was the most important, because 'only in its art does a period become sublimated and truly accessible to inquiring contemplation'.²⁴ One of Philipp's projects was to write a history of Australian domestic architecture, an ambition which was only realised in a few articles and reviews listed in the bibliography of his publications.

In 1947, Philipp had written his first article for *Present Opinion*, a concrete demonstration of his theories, prompted by an exhibition of three of Arthur Boyd's religious paintings at the Rowden White Library in the University of Melbourne, held in the second semester of 1946.²⁵ Philipp began by asking why Boyd painted religious themes, when for more than a century they had been the sterile preserves of pious academicians. Philipp sought an explanation for such a choice of subject matter:

*Boyd is not telling a story. He is saying (or, not to prejudge the issue, trying to say) how he feels about his time, about the state of the world. Breughel and Rembrandt, Brouwer and Daumier, were not telling mere stories. Their 'stories' (Breughel's proverbs, Rembrandt's bibliographical episodes, Brouwer's genre, and Daumier's literary or contemporary scenes) are used as the vehicle of a human and artistic message.*²⁶

He then continued that:

It seems almost obvious to the writer that Boyd's diptych is dominated by bewilderment and terror of the violent and sanguineous events we have all witnessed during these last years. In the Mockers we are bluntly faced with evil run amok; with an eye to this the artist shows us in the Mourners,²⁷ mankind's grief and compassion. Still an imaginary critic may refuse to be satisfied. 'Why', he asks, 'the religious cloak? Why not the direct statement? Why the Crucifixion and not the Concentration Camp?' Mine (and perhaps the artist's) reply would be that the factual statement is apt to remain merely documentary, whilst the symbol of the Crucifixion enables the artist to stress the universal – one might also say – the metaphysical aspect of the event. Boyd – not

²³ *ibid*, p. 67.

²⁴ *ibid*.

²⁵ Franz Philipp, 'On three paintings by Arthur Boyd', *Present Opinion*, vol. II, no. 1, 1947, pp. 9-14.

²⁶ *ibid*, p. 9.

²⁷ Philipp was equally concerned with the drawings of this period and persuaded Ursula Hoff to buy them for the Print Room, for he remarked to Boyd: 'I have shown the sheet with the 1941-44 drawings to Ursula who would very much like to buy two drawings for the Print Room of the Gallery. If you are willing to sell, the ones she has in mind are AB. no. 100, *The Mourners* and no. 105, *Woman with dog*.' The references were to Philipp's own catalogue at the end of the Boyd monograph. This letter is in the University of Melbourne Archives, with the rest of the correspondence between Boyd and Philipp, DS L 11/3. Acc.36. 166, referred to in note 1.

*unlike Eliot – uses a special kind of association, so as to convey his message sub specie aeternitatis with more weight and emphasis than a bald record would have allowed.*²⁸

Philipp, like everyone else, recognised that Boyd's compositions were informed by Peter Breughel, but their 'mannerist' qualities recalled his own youthful fascination with that period situated between the Renaissance and the early Baroque. 'Mannerism', Philipp wrote, 'is a style of stress, the style of a period of disasters and upheavals, of despair and disillusionment.'²⁹ Boyd had recaptured that style, which had been little appreciated until after the First World War, when El Greco and some of its greatest representatives had been rediscovered.

The substance of this interpretation is enlarged in Philipp's monograph on Boyd, published in 1967, but the personal 'Viennese' reflections are relegated to the notes, and the references to concentration camps is denied in a footnote. The denial was prompted by Boyd's own reluctance to acknowledge such an influence. On 4 January 1966, in a letter to Philipp, Boyd gently objected to the:

*Reference to concentration camps as influence in the paintings of the 'Mocker' and 'Mourners'. It is possibly the right interpretation of the chaotic mockers. I don't actually remember seeing the photographs, news-reels, etc. of those things before I painted the pictures, but I might have.*³⁰

Although Philipp quoted Boyd's gentle response in a footnote,³¹ he restated his interpretation in more general terms, with reference to his earlier article.

*Art, I argued, could not face such subject matter directly – only through the universal veil of symbol or myth. With the instinctive sureness of a tightrope walker Boyd turned from primordial to historical myth – to the familiar communal myth of the Bible. With equal instinctive sureness he evoked the needed, the fitting pictorial language out of the past, a language both literal and universal, and thus painted one of the few great images of the war that has just ended. That his model was Bruegel's Way to Calvary in Vienna I cannot doubt, although the transformation is radical and all-pervading: Bruegel's historical narrative, detached, ironic (see the Simon of Cyrene episode), with the minutiae of the here-now-and-always is turned into a mythical version. Like Bruegel, Arthur Boyd creates distance (physical and emotional) by means of the high view and the characteristic mannerist foreground (proscenium) screen of a brambled ridge.*³²

Nor was Philipp alone in his appreciation of Boyd, for other 'Dunera boys', such as the philosophy professors, Gert Buchdahl, who bought *The Mourners*, and Peter Herbst who

²⁸ Philipp, 'On three paintings by Arthur Boyd', p. 10.

²⁹ *ibid*, p. 11.

³⁰ Arthur Boyd, letter to Franz Philipp, 4 January 1966, University of Melbourne archive, DS L 11/3.Acc.36. 166.

³¹ Franz Philipp, *Arthur Boyd*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1967, p. 138, n.7; Philipp commented: 'It was only in 1945 that the full truth of the genocide became known to the more civilised world. I did not and do not assume that the artist refers in any direct manner to the concentration camps – but to "evil", to man's fallen state which was then (in 1945) more crassly manifested than for some centuries.'

³² Philipp, *Arthur Boyd*, p. 42.

owned a number of important works, were among Boyd's first patrons. Franz owned the painting of *Abraham and the Angels*, 1946 (collection of Mrs June Philipp, Melbourne), which he insisted on reproducing in colour and discussed at some length.³³ Boyd's patronage was different to that of Sidney Nolan and Albert Tucker, whom Sunday and John Reed had supported in circumstances that have become legendary; but Arthur was in a different category. As he explained to Philipp in a letter of 25 January 1966:

John Reed and his wife were sympathetic and hospitable friends rather than patrons until the show in 1953 (retrospective at Peter Bray's) from which John Reed bought a painting called 'Christ walking on the water', a small painting. 'The Thirty Pieces of Silver' was the first large-scale purchase he made from me. Earlier works that he and his wife had purchased from me such as 'Progression' and 'The Kite, South Melbourne' (we used to call it the 'pink picture') from the 1943 series, had been semi-gifts, i.e. sold for token payments. The Reeds were generous friends of ours and many other contemporaries, artists and other creative people, who did not at that time find much acknowledgment from the public. The Reeds offered the use of their holiday cottages to us and to others as well from time to time and we were all welcome as house-guests at their house at Heidelberg at any time we chose.³⁴

In some of these letters it is also clear that the Reeds were reluctant to return pictures that they had been 'lent' by Arthur, or could be evasive in allowing Philipp to see and study what they had been lent, or what had been left behind. The reticence and subtlety with which both men expressed their view of the Reed's patronage, is worth noting, for it is the gentlest of rebukes to the prevailing interpretation that Heide was a kind of Australian Bloomsbury.

The correspondence between Philipp and Boyd, now preserved in the University of Melbourne archives, began with the genesis of the book in 1965, and documents how closely they worked together in the production of the monograph. Boyd had been resident in England from 1959 and their collaboration was dependent on a friendship begun some fifteen years earlier. Several decades later June Philip lent the material to Ursula Hoff, when she wrote her volume, *The Art of Arthur Boyd*, published by André Deutsch in 1986. Many letters consist of innumerable questions as 'there is', Philipp explained to Boyd, 'a disturbing amount of contradictory information in the books, articles and catalogues that have been concerned with your work and biography, and I believe it should be possible to clear up most of these once for all.'³⁵ Some of the hard slog is shown by remarks such as that in a letter of 3 March 1965, 'Dear Arthur, ... I have traced and partly seen at least 50 pictures through replies to me letter in all State newspapers – especially some very fine early paintings.'

³³ *ibid*, plate XIII, p. 46

³⁴ Arthur Boyd, letter to Franz Philipp, 25 January 1966, University of Melbourne archive, DS L 11/3.Acc.36 166.

³⁵ Franz Philipp, letter to Arthur Boyd, 16 September 1965, University of Melbourne archive, DS L 11/3.Acc.36. 166

Many of the questions were about details of location and provenance, but the most important for Philip were concerned with the interpretation of Boyd's religious paintings. Philipp wrote to Boyd, that:

A number of critics have commented on the preference for Old Testament themes in your biblical paintings. Recently, in an article in Dissent,³⁶ which I enclose, Margaret Garlick (a former student, now senior tutor in the Fine Arts Department, who wrote the Perceval monograph for Georgian House), writes, on p.22: 'Almost all the subjects are taken from the Old Testament; one feels that Boyd deliberately avoids the New Testament idea of salvation in order to reaffirm a post-war faith for the Jews.' and later: 'Profiles are ugly, simplified cartoon faces with accented eyes and noses: a Jewish caricature.' This had never occurred to me. I suspect it to be mere fancy – would you comment? I have always felt that the Old Testament stories attracted you as being 'closer to myth' and having a wider range of human experiences including the erotic – as they attracted Rembrandt so strongly. Was I wrong? Altogether – if you like – would you comment on the article, which is interesting and very good on the early landscapes.³⁷

Boyd replied:

I did not deliberately avoid the New Testament. In fact, the first Bible pictures I painted were the 'Mockers' and the 'Mourners'. The 'Laughing Heads' (misnamed by someone 'Laughing Jews') with big eyes and noses³⁸ were painted [in] 1938 to 1939 and had far more to do with illustrating Dostoevsky than anything else. I have never thought of any painting I did as caricature. I do agree with what you say about the Old Testament stories being closer to myth and having a wide range of experience. I feel there is a chip on the shoulder, or a slightly aggressive attitude in Miss Garlick's writing. She seems very determined to use strong words, none quite related. Maybe I am sensitive about words and phrases like 'violent', 'paint of moral servitude', 'degraded', 'debased', 'extreme perversions', 'bitter', 'retrograde', 'stumbling', 'hideous', 'bestial', or 'bestial groping', 'revulsion', 'sterile', 'copulating', 'obsessed', 'subversion', 'unwholesome', 'frenzied', 'rape', 'love game', 'corruption', 'spews', 'ugly', 'crude', 'goggly', 'desperate', 'ungainly', 'futility', 'grating', 'carnal'. Without their context I know that some of these words are merely descriptive, but they seem to me to be persuasive in their context. The article as a whole has the same sort of brashness and journalese that Robert Hughes had when I last read his work. Ordinarily I would never comment on anything a critic says about my work. A.B.³⁹

In his discussion of Boyd's early work Philipp reproduced a large mural (21.3m x 3.7m) made for Martin Boyd's house, the 'Grange', formerly the property of a family called Harkaway.⁴⁰ He wrote to Arthur Boyd to inform him of his progress:

I have been out to Harkaway last week, with young Nigel Buesst, who has taken a lot of photos, both in colour and black and white, but I have not seen the results yet. The frescoes are far more

³⁶ M. Garlick (born Margaret Plant), 'The extremes of Arthur Boyd', *Dissent*, Spring, 1964, vol.4, no.iii, pp.21-23.

³⁷ Franz Philipp, list of questions to Arthur Boyd, December 1968, University of Melbourne archive, DS L 11/3.Acc.36 166.

³⁸ These paintings were illustrated by Philipp as plates 5-7 in *Arthur Boyd*, and discussed, pp.27-28, 238.

³⁹ Arthur Boyd, letter to Franz Philipp, 30 December 1968, University of Melbourne archive, DS L 11/3.Acc.36 166.

⁴⁰ Philipp, *Arthur Boyd*, 1967, see especially chapter 3, pp.52-56.

*beautiful than I had remembered them, but some damage has already been done, both by the wetness of the wall (outer corner) and by human (?) hand. Fortunately none of the main parts are damaged. I was horrified at the state of the house; as soon as I can find the time I shall contact Fred Williams (who, I hear, also wants to take some action) and the National Trust. I do indeed feel very strongly about this and promise you to do what I can.*⁴¹

Later Philipp wrote:

*I have been out to the Grange this time with David Lawrence who is the restorer at the National Gallery. The Assumption has been damaged. I am trying very hard to get to sponsor a removal for the New Gallery.*⁴²

The frescoes were eventually destroyed and the only sustained account of them is in the monograph. Indeed Philipp's research was of crucial significance in preserving some record of them and of their importance.

Philipp's assessment of Boyd's landscapes surprised their author. On 9 April 1965, Philipp wrote:

*Dear Arthur, ... I have certainly given greater emphasis to the landscapes than you have, simply because I believe that your best landscapes are – in a way – as important as your other work at least within the development of landscape painting in Australia. I have, I think, only included paintings of great quality. My choice is of course quite open to discussion, though I feel strongly about the Saul and David (painting) being reproduced in colour, and also about including one of the 'Breughellesque' Harkaway landscapes in colour.*⁴³

Philipp chose to reproduce the image of *Susanna Bathing*, which Boyd has based loosely on Rembrandt's *Woman Bathing* in the National Gallery, London.

Freshly returned from the United States in 1963, where he had been much taken by the abstract expressionism of Jackson Pollock, Philipp relished the heavy impasto of Boyd's early technique. Yet he found Boyd diffident about allowing him to express his enthusiasm in writing, indeed even censorious:

*I do not quite understand your horror of the palette knife. Surely this is a perfectly legitimate tool, and I still believe – in spite of what you say – that the two early landscapes (of which I enclose some bad photos, taken by myself) are most attractive. I shall certainly want to mention some of them in the text, but I shall not insist on reproducing them in colour if you still feel so strongly about it.*⁴⁴

On other occasions, Philipp expressed doubts about the interpretation of Australian art in terms dictated only by a perceived dichotomy of figurative versus abstract painting, as in

⁴¹ Franz Philipp, undated letter (1965) to Arthur Boyd, University of Melbourne archive, DS L 11/3.Acc.36. 166.

⁴² *ibid.*

⁴³ *ibid.*

⁴⁴ Franz Philipp, letter to Arthur Boyd, 9 April 1965, University of Melbourne archive, DS L 11/3.Acc.36. 166.

the exhibition arranged by his colleague Bernard Smith, entitled *Rebels and Precursors*.⁴⁵ Philipp found the Australian nationalism of such an exhibition somewhat comic, and was much dismayed when T.S.R. Boase in his introductory forward to his own monograph on Boyd, concentrated on the polemics of Smith's exhibition, *Rebels and Precursors*, failing to understand the novelty of Philipp's text. Boase had occupied prominent posts in England for he had been director of the Courtauld Institute in London, and President of Magdalen College, Oxford. He was a passionate admirer of Boyd's paintings. In many ways he was eminently suitable to write an introduction for an Australian artist's monograph for an English publishing house. Yet at one point Philipp stubbornly wished to withdraw the book altogether on the grounds that the introduction was perfunctory. He was persuaded against it, and wrote a new preface (the published one) to contradict Boase.⁴⁶

In much of the correspondence there is a reticence about exploring any autobiographical or familial allusions in Boyd's painting, both on the part of the author and the subject. Nor is there any reference to the diaries that Boyd kept for most of his life.⁴⁷ On 4 January 1966 Boyd wrote Philipp a fairly lengthy commentary on the typescript on the book.

I am fairly happy about the accuracy and amount of biographical detail and family history. I liked your quality of observation and quotation from others. (See an article by James Mollison in Art and Australia⁴⁸ for the kind of 'familial angle' I do not like; and I have never met the man).⁴⁹

At other times Boyd found infelicities in style, such as when he remarked: 'On page 22 I don't like "of Boyd's battles of sex" nor later "drifting on the *Sea of Lust*".'⁵⁰ Several years earlier, when the book was beginning, on 30 December 1964, Boyd had sent Philipp a typescript of a tape he had made, which is as close as he came to an autobiographical statement. Boyd explained that:

When John Hetherington of the Age was doing his artist's profiles and wrote to me for material I made a long tape recording (1961) of my earliest impressions, memories, anecdotes, anything that I

⁴⁵ *Rebels and Precursors: aspects of painting in Melbourne 1937/1947*, Melbourne, National Gallery of Victoria, 1962.

⁴⁶ On 1 September 1966, Philipp wrote to Boyd, 'I am enclosing a copy of a letter I have just sent to Trevor Craker concerning Mr. Boase's Introduction, which I have found most disconcerting. The enclosure will explain why. I should like to know whether you really want the Antipodean affair dragged back into life. My reasons for trying to avoid this are set out in the letter to Craker. As to my personal feelings, these are also expressed in the letter. I really think the whole unpleasant affair could easily have been avoided. As you know I have my hands more than full of important work and no time such unnecessary diversions.' Boyd replied on 14 September, 'Dear Franz, I am terribly sorry about the whole affair. I gather from Thames and Hudson, after talking to Miss Lowman and Mr Neurath that they really want to correct as much as possible all the items that you object to. I think they must need to do it very tactfully because they are involved with Dr Boase on quite a number of other books. One of the smaller ones is a small reissue of a book that he wrote many years ago on the life of St Francis illustrated with some of my lithographs. From the conversations we've had I really believe they want to put the think in its correct perspective. Dr Boase himself I know would be very glad to hear from you and would welcome any suggestions. I think he would see your point.' These letters are in the University of Melbourne archives.

⁴⁷ The only study of Boyd which uses the diaries, though not extensively, is the catalogue by Grazia Gunn, *Arthur Boyd; Seven Persistent Images*, Canberra: Australian National Gallery, 1985.

⁴⁸ J. Mollison 'Arthur Boyd', *Art and Australia*, vol.3, no.2, September 1965, pp.114-23.

⁴⁹ University of Melbourne archives, UMA, DSLII/3.

⁵⁰ *ibid.*

*felt might be useful. After typing this from the tape a much cut down version of it was sent to him for his article. He of course cut it down still more. Perhaps the original material would be as near to an autobiography as you could get.*⁵¹

Yet at times Boyd found even this too much, as on 28 April 1966, when he objected:

*I find myself very embarrassed by your opening which uses a quotation of my own. Apart from wanting to rather get away from the personal approach, which we thought you had avoided so well in your first draft, I felt the opening is a little misleading in tone. That quotation as you know was merely a reply to direct question of Hetherington's and my answer actually gave more of the pro's [sic] and cones to that question. Without its surrounding context I feel it sounds a bit arch or pompous and hope you can use the earlier draft beginning which I told you at the time when I read it that I liked very much. Couldn't the whole opening part about the Boyds and their family relationships be put at the end because your writing on my work is of such a high standard that the family talk slightly reduces it in some way. The quote at the beginning of the book could possibly, if you want to keep it, be inserted somewhere further down. In short, I think the biographical part which is not research in the same way as the rest of your work perhaps takes away from the whole.*⁵²

Boyd then concluded: 'Apart from my shrinking away from much intimate reference I think it is a marvellous piece of writing and the finest appreciation of my work I could ever hope to have published.'⁵³

For the cover Philipp chose an image of black captivity, a half-caste child and her bridegroom. Based on drawings that Boyd had made in the early 1950s on a railway journey in South Australia when he had reacted to the degraded treatment of Aborigines on a train, the paintings were recollections made a decade later. For Boyd's admirers they have proved the most difficult paintings to interpret. By high-lighting this aspect of Boyd's work on the cover Philipp made a plea for Boyd as an artist of social protest, a claim which he only hinted at in the text. One of the earliest attempts at interpretation had been Tim Burstall's film, *Love, Marriage and Death of a Half-Caste*.⁵⁴ Produced by Eltham films in 1960, the film animates the series by Boyd, which tell the story of an aborigine and his half-caste bride. Burstall wrote the original ballad, sung to guitar accompaniment, which runs for the duration of the film sung by Donald Ayrton to music by Karl Ogden. It was conceived as an alternative to a high brow documentary, an imaginative animated interpretation of Boyd's imagery from a director who had worked in the Boyd pottery.

In 1970 Eric Westbrook, the director of the National Gallery of Victoria, proposed an exhibition of Arthur Boyd's landscapes as part of the bicentennial celebrations for Captain Cook's discovery of Australia. Though he had been suffering from a heart condition since

⁵¹ The text of Boyd's transcript, 'Biographical notes,' far richer in detail than the cut down version, is with the correspondence, UMA, DSLII/3.

⁵² *ibid.*

⁵³ *ibid.*

⁵⁴ Tim Burstall (director) and Patrick Ryan (producer), *Love, Marriage and Death of a Half-Caste*, Eltham Film Production, Australian, 1960.

1968 Philipp curated *Arthur Boyd's Australia*. The exhibition opened with early Peninsular landscapes (1936-1940), followed by those of the 'primeval bush', early Hunter paintings, and Berwick and Wimmera landscapes from 1945 to 1952/3. Biblical paintings with landscape backgrounds were included. Some works, which had escaped the monograph, such as an early Bridge painting, *Bride Asleep in a Dark landscape*, 1957 (private collection, Melbourne), rounded off the exhibition, with one or two of the Nebuchadnezzar series.

Philipp died in May 1970 while on sabbatical leave in London, never destined to see the exhibition he devised, *Arthur Boyd's Australia*, which was opened by the Queen. It was also the occasion on which Ursula Hoff received her OBE. Arthur Boyd made a bookplate in 1971, an etching of St Jerome (fig.4), a hermit, a contemplative man, for Philipp's art-historical library which was given by June Philipp to the National Gallery of Victoria. Boyd remembered him as 'a gentle thoughtful soul'.⁵⁵

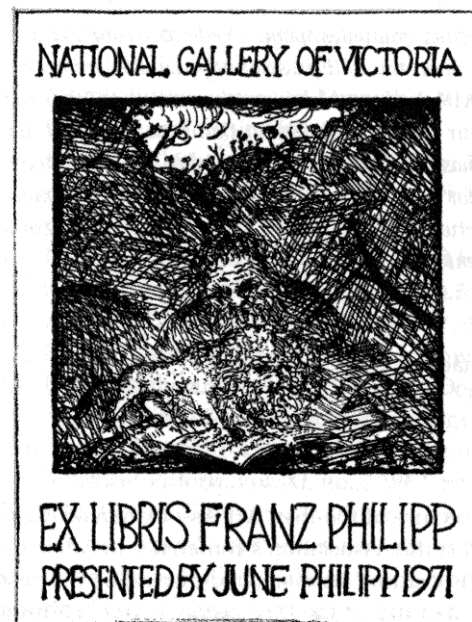


Figure 4 Arthur Boyd, Bookplate.

Most students would remember Philipp for his Renaissance scholarship, but his major books were his monograph on an Australian contemporary painter, Boyd, and the other a volume of essays, which he edited, on the history of collecting as exemplified by the National Gallery of Victoria.⁵⁶ This volume was dedicated to Sir Daryl Lindsay and included some of the best scholarly essays that have ever been written on individual works in the collection, such as Antonio Morassi's account of Tiepolo's *Banquet of Cleopatra*, and Philipp's own essay on Poussin's *Crossing of the Red Sea*. Some essays were commissioned from international scholars, like Kenneth Clark, who had had some involvement in the collection as adviser to the Felton Bequest. Philipp's Italian Renaissance essays were all published in local Melbourne journals, occasional pieces highlighting National Gallery acquisitions, such as a two-page note on Bartolommeo

⁵⁵ Arthur Boyd in conversation with Jaynie Anderson, at Suffolk, July 1998.

⁵⁶ For Philipp's individual publications, referred to in this section, see Appendix 1, 'Franz Philipp: publications'.

Bellano's stone relief of the *Lamentation of Christ*, and Bellano's bronze statuette of David. He also wrote on medieval French and English stained glass roundels, which he hoped would stimulate a revival of such techniques for the projected decoration of Wilson Hall in the University of Melbourne.

Philipp's typewritten lectures, which he described as 'My Treasures', always suggested lines of enquiry rather than giving set answers to questions. Two of his published articles, one on Giorgio Vasari – an essay on Renaissance historiography in honour of his two teachers, Max Crawford and Julius von Schlosser – the other a lecture commemorating the 700th anniversary of Giotto's birth, convey to some extent the experience of listening to him. In some ways he wanted to say too much in his Renaissance lectures, packed as they were with quotations in foreign languages and erudite asides, but he always produced an original text of great quality that was lively in his feeling for the *matière* of painting and sculpture. He was not on the whole interested in connoisseurship, but in iconography. Unlike almost any of his contemporaries among the Jewish émigré art historians he was deeply interested in the art of his time. His passionate espousal of the art of Jackson Pollock following a trip to the United States was in marked contrast to another student of Julius von Schlosser, Ernst Gombrich, who actively disliked abstract painting and wrote articles to that effect. Mannerism became a subject that Philipp wrote about only within an Australian context, a metaphor of his own existence.

After Philipp's death there was a search to find a suitable memorial. Charles Mitchell, who was Professor of Art History at Bryn Mawr, where many gifted Melbourne students had studied, such as Virginia Spate, Margaret Manion and Roger Benjamin, suggested to Philipp's friends, pupils and colleagues that they buy a reprint of the great Viennese art historical journal the *Jahrbuch der Kunstsammlungen der allerhöchsten kaiserhauses in Wien*. On 26 May 1971 in a letter to Burke, Mitchell wrote: 'I urge you to gird up your loins, pester every rich man you know in Melbourne, get students to subscribe their mites – and buy the thing in memory of Franz Philipp. There could be no better memorial to him and it will help nourish students from the breast at which he himself sucked.'⁵⁷ The volumes are now in the Baillieu Library.

When rummaging through Philipp's correspondence with Boyd I came across some references, which confirmed that the teacher who had meant so much to me, returned my esteem, as in a letter from Philipp of 11 August 1966:

I have two personal requests. One of our most gifted graduates, Jaynie Anderson, is on her way to the USA to take up a scholarship at Bryn Mawr and will pass through London from 29th August to 10 September. She is completing an MA thesis on Nolan's early work up to 1950 and would like to see you and talk to you about your contact with him at that time. Although the family are old friends of the Nolans (her father has been physician to the Nolan family for many years) Cynthia has made it quite impossible for her to see Sid when he was here. I wonder whether you could help

⁵⁷ School of Fine Arts, Classical Studies and Archaeology, University of Melbourne, archive.

to arrange a meeting between her and Sid? I would take this as a great personal favour; she is a most gifted and pleasant girl.⁵⁸

Jaynie Anderson
School of Fine Arts, Classical Studies and Archaeology
University of Melbourne

Appendix 1

Franz Philipp: publications

'On three paintings by Arthur Boyd', *Present Opinion* (Melbourne University Arts Association), vol.II, no.1, 1947, pp.9-14.

'Some notes on the study of history of art', *Present Opinion*, vol.III, no.1, 1948, pp.67-70.

A Private View of Works of Art Presented to the University, 25 October 1951, Rowden White Library, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1951 [catalogue of an exhibition prepared by Franz Philipp with Hilda Fletcher].

'Medieval stained glass medallions', *Quarterly Bulletin of the National Gallery of Victoria*, vol.VI, no.1, 1952, unpaginated.

'A relief attributed to Bartolommeo Bellano', *Quarterly Bulletin of the National Gallery of Victoria*, vol.III, no.2, 1953, pp.4-5.

'Some aspects of stained glass painting', *Quarterly Bulletin of the National Gallery of Victoria*, vol.III, no.1, 1952, pp.16-24.

'The Dunlop Art Contest', *Meanjin*, vol.IX, 1952, pp.148-51.

'Australia's Home' [review of a book by Robin Boyd], *Meanjin*, vol.XLVIII, no.11, 1952, pp.36-41.

'Two newly acquired works of Australian sculpture: Arthur Boyd's *Saul and David* and G. F. Lewers [sic]', *Quarterly Bulletin of the National Gallery of Victoria*, vol.IX, no.1, 1955, pp.2-4.

'Notes on the study of Australian colonial architecture', *Historical Studies*, vol.VIII, May 1959, pp.405-21.

'A survey of research in the history of art in Australia', in A. Grenfell Price (ed.), *Survey of the Humanities in Australia*, Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1959, pp.160-65.

'The culture centre', *Meanjin*, vol.LXXXIV, no.20, 1961, pp.80-84.

'Kenneth Clark, *Looking at Pictures*', *Journal of Australasian Universities Language and Literature Association*, vol.XVI, November 1961, pp.258-60.

'The Melbourne Album edited by Clive Turnbull', *Meanjin*, vol.XXI, no.4, 1962, pp.533-34.

'Varsari and the Renaissance', *Melbourne Historical Journal*, vol.II, 1962, pp.24-34.

In Honour of Daryl Lindsay: Essays and Studies, [editor with June Stewart] Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1965.

'Poussin's *Crossing of the Red Sea*', in *In Honour of Daryl Lindsay*, op cit, pp.80-99.

⁵⁸ University of Melbourne archives, UMA, DSLII/3.

'An afterthought to Blake's *Antaeus*', *Annual Bulletin of the National Gallery of Victoria*, vol.VII, 1965, pp.24-25.

'Giotto and the Renaissance', *Quadernie dell'Istituto Italiano di Cultura*, vol.II, 1967, pp.23-38.

'Jacopo Tintoretto's *Portrait of the Doge Pietro Loredano*', *Quarterly Bulletin of the National Gallery of Victoria*, vol.XI, no.2, 1967, pp.2-4.

Arthur Boyd, London:Thames and Hudson, 1967.

Arthur Boyd's Australia [catalogue of an exhibition selected by Franz Philipp], Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria, 2 April – 4 May 1970, introduction, pp.2-6.

'El Greco's *Entombment of the Count of Orgaz* and Spanish mediaeval tomb art', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, vol.XLIV, 1981, pp.76-89.